ART OF REVIEW

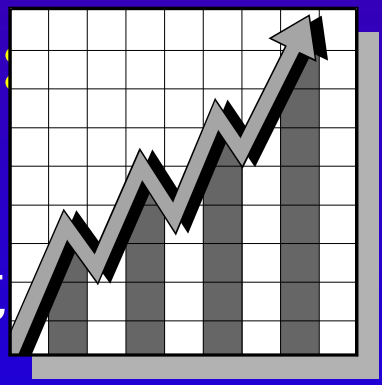
SPD Planning Conference

Santa Fe, New Mexico

May 2000

WHY REVIEW ?

Objective of review is to add value to the decision making process by:



"Identification of error/flaw in failure t
follow proper procedures, analysis,
recommendations which have material
effect on plan components, scope,
scale, cost-sharing, items of local
cooperation, ability to budget, obtain
authorization, etc."

WHY REVIEW? (Cont'd)

Objective of review is to add value to the decision making process by:

- "Identification of policy/analysis/procedural errors which, though not fatal to report/project at hand, should not be repeated in future reports."

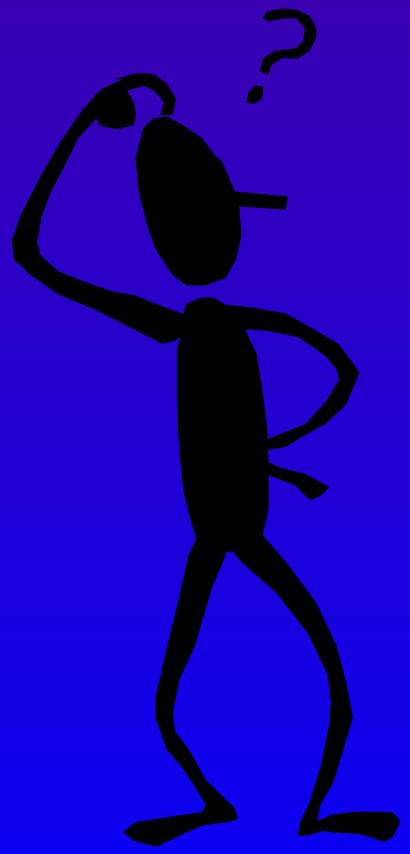
- "Create opportunity to build support for

TYPES OF REVIEW

- Independent Technical Review
- Review Conferences
- Policy Review
- Washington Level Review
- Public Review

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEWER

- Purpose of Report
- Next Step
- Budget Status
- Prior Guidance



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- Authorization?
- Budget Decision?
- Support the PCA?

NEXT STEP

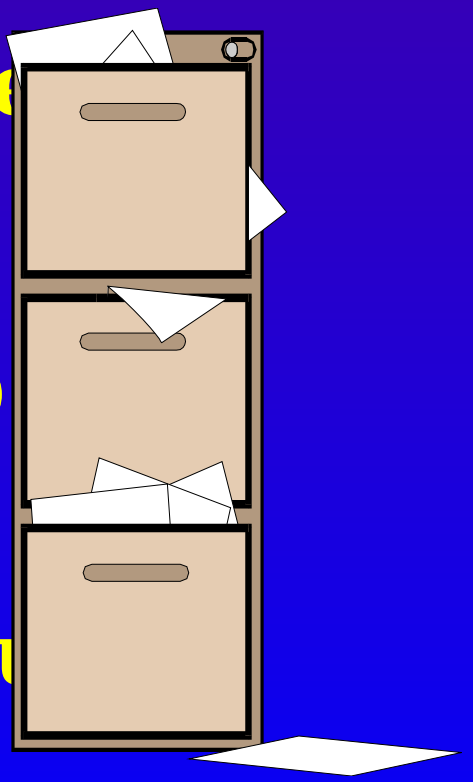
- Hold AFB
- Prepare Draft Report
- Prepare Final Report
- Conduct PED
- Sign PCA

BUDGET STATUS

- Administration Priority
- Current/Future Funding
- Congressional Add

PRIOR GUIDANCE

- Section 905(b) Analysis/PSP
- Work Allowance Guidance
- IRC Memorandums
- Memorandums from SPD Milestone Conferences
- Other Letters/Memorandu
- Similar Issues on Other Projects



COMMENT/RESOLUTION DOCUMENTATION

- Comment
- Response
- Discussion
- Required Action
- Action Taken
- Assessment
- Lessons Learned

COMMENT/RESOLUTION DOCUMENTATION

- **Comment -** Clear Statement of concern with recommended action
- **Response**
- **Discussion**
- **Required Action**
- **Action Taken**
- **Assessment**
- **Lessons Learned**

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW COMMENTS

4 Principal Elements

- A clear statement of the concern (information deficiency or incorrect application of policy or procedures)
- Basis of the concern (law, policy, guidance)
- Significance of the concern
- Specific actions needed to resolve the

CHECKLISTS

- EC 1165-2-203, Appendix B - Policy Compliance Review Considerations
- Internal Control Review Checklist (ER-1105-2-100)
- District Quality Management Plan Checklists

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

- With and Without Project Assumptions
- Consistency with the Principles and Guidelines
- Cost Apportionment (who pays), especially when a locally preferred plan is proposed
- Commitments and unresolved issues in prior Conference Memorandums

COMMENT/RESOLUTION DOCUMENTATION

- **Comment**
- **Response -** An answer to the specific issue raised and proposed resolution
- **Discussion**
- **Required Action**
- **Action Taken**
- **Assessment**

REVIEW AND RESPONSE ARE LINKED

- Responding to comments provides an appreciation for the task of review.
- Reviewers have the opportunity to learn from the comments that they receive.
- “Who was the arrogant S.O.B that made these comments?” - I was.
- Don’t develop comments as you have received them but rather as you would like to receive them

RESPONDING TO COMMENTS

- Responding to comments that are editorial in nature or opinions is viewed as especially burdensome.
- Focusing responses on substantive comments would reduce the burden.
- “Concur” or “comment noted” is not a response.

COMMENT/RESOLUTION DOCUMENTATION

- **Comment**
- **Response**
- **Discussion -** Clarification of the issue between the preparer and reviewer
- **Required Action**
- **Action Taken**
- **Assessment**

COMMENT/RESOLUTION DOCUMENTATION

- **Comment**
- **Response**
- **Discussion**
- **Required Action -** Agreed upon action to be taken to resolve the issue
- **Action Taken**
- **Assessment**

COMMENT/RESOLUTION DOCUMENTATION

- **Comment**
- **Response**
- **Discussion**
- **Required Action**
- **Action Taken -** The changes that were made with references to the pages
- **Assessment**
- **Lessons Learned**

COMMENT/RESOLUTION DOCUMENTATION

- **Comment**
- **Response**
- **Discussion**
- **Required Action**
- **Action Taken**
- **Assessment -** Back check by the reviewer and finding of adequacy

COMMENT/RESOLUTION DOCUMENTATION

- Comment
- Response
- Discussion
- Required Action
- Action Taken
- Assessment
- **Lessons Learned -** This is OPTIONAL Was anything learned worth sharing?

LIMITS ON THE REVIEW

- Review will normally not be revisited (unless changes are made in final documentation or the results are causing the plan formulation process to produce unreasonable or inconsistent results).

- Policy issues should be forwarded for resolution to SPD in a timely manner.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD REVIEWER

- Strong Planning Background
- Familiar with P&G, WRDAs and Other Laws
- Good Writer and Communicator
- Experience with Many Project Purposes
- Strong Stomach and Thick Skin

REVIEWER'S MINDSET

Suggest changes that would completely reverse the message intended by the author. This puts the author in the awkward position of having to circulate the report again for further unhelpful comments or choosing to ignore your "upgrades". If your comments are ignored, you have the God-given right to ridicule the end product and claim you had no input. And, on the off chance that the report that you ridiculed becomes successful, you can claim it as part of your accomplishments.

REVIEWER'S MINDSET

- "I don't like the project" - pick it apart
- "You are Trying to Sneak Something by"
- Does Report Meet Minimum Requirements?
- Perfection

APPROACHES TO REVIEW

- "I begin at the end - recommendations - and work forward. Does the report tell the story?"
- "I begin with the planning objectives - What is the rationale for the formulation of plans?"
- "I begin with the executive summary of the NEPA document - and then back up to the decision

THE REVIEW PARADOX

- Negative - The reviewer is looking for flaws and errors.

- Positive - Review comments are intended to help, and make the product better and the decision better.

VALUE COMMENTS AS WELCOME ASSISTANCE

- Comments should not be viewed as a burden, an impediment or criticism.
- They can be welcomed as assistance and viewed as a way of improving the product.
- Comments can indicate areas that may need clarification to assist the understanding of those who may not be familiar with either the study or process.
- The more comments, the more perspectives are available and the better the product

COMMON PROBLEMS
WITH THE REVIEW PROCESS

- Incomplete Document Packages
- Scheduling
- Poor Follow-Up
- Inconsistent Review
- Communications

PROBLEMS WITH REVIEW

- The level of review is not always understood.
- When the product is far off of the mark, specific comments are often difficult and numerous.
- Expertise and experience are often in short supply.
- Everyday pressures to achieve schedules compromises the

BIGGEST PROBLEM FOR REVIEW PROCESS

HOWARD GOLDMAN'S REVIEW TIPS

- Review is an art, not science.
- Remember that review reflects the reviewer's personal biases and expertise.
- Good review requires practice, regularity, exercise and familiarity.
- Use review checklists.

MORE TIPS...

- Determine if a good story is told.
- Separate those comments that are editorial in nature.
- Concentrate on substantive comments. Some things are a matter of style.
- Take the time to cull out poor comments.

MORE TIPS...

- Review team communication can greatly enhance the review process.
- Good review requires expertise and experience - if you don't have it, don't hesitate to consult others.
- Make use of the SPD-Wide Regional Experts.
- Make use of the vertical team - SPD and

ART OF REVIEW

Panel Discussion

THE PANEL

John Bogue Jim Conley

JoAnn Duman Clark Frentzen

John Lucyshyn

QUESTION #1

What is your mindset when you initiate a review?

QUESTION #2

How do you know when you have read a good document?

QUESTION #3

How do you know when you have read a bad document?

QUESTION #4

What is the first thing that you do in reviewing a document?

QUESTION #5

What is the most important piece of advice that you would like to give to a new reviewer?

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